

51 Warrington Crescent,
London, W.9
May 13, 1935

Miss D.G. Brackett,
International African Institute,
2 Wood Street,
London, S.W.1

Dear Miss Brackett,

I am sending you herewith a brief statement on the field-work which I propose to undertake on my return to South Africa.

In general I should like my plans to fit in with those of the South African Inter-University Committee on African Studies relative to the effects of social and economic changes on Native life in South Africa. Their plan, as I understand it, divides itself into the following sections:-

(a) the collection and collation of such material as is still available bearing on African Life and Customs as they may be said to have existed and functioned prior to white contact. This aspect of the work is very largely a reconstruction of Native life on the basis of existing literature on the subject, information obtained from reliable informants and direct observation of such aspects of Native Culture as have persisted to the present time.

(b) A study of the social and economic movements which have been set going in South Africa as a result of the settlement and the development of the country by Europeans in so far as they bear on or affect Native life.

(c) A direct study of modern native life, and in particular that of the disintegration of Native tribal life under the impact of various aspects of Western civilization--administrative, religious and economic.

There is a further aspect in which I am particularly interested and that is the study of Native life under modern conditions, viewed not so much or not only as a disintegrative but also as a re-integrative ^{process} ~~one~~ with old and new elements welded into a functioning whole with varying degrees of success.

My own impression is that this process of re-orientation of Native life can with most advantage be studied through the family rather than through the larger social groupings of African life such as the clan or the tribe. It is undoubtedly necessary in the first instance to endeavour to get a clear understanding of the latter groupings, their working and inter-relations and their place in Native life as a whole through the reconstructive process referred to above, but the grouping which seems to be serving as the main clearing-ground for the many new interests in Native life--whether they be viewed as disintegrative or integrative ~~elements~~ elements--is the family. It is through this unit primarily that many things old and/or new are being rejected or adopted, and it is this unit which at the moment and for a long time to come will provide the African child with the elements, disjointed or ~~xxxxx~~ well-knit as the case may be, of such loyalty to Bantu Culture as still exists or seems desirable. It is for that reason that, without getting it out of its proper perspective, I want to make this kinship unit the basis of my work.

With regard to method of study I think it will be necessary to confine one's attention to a specific ~~tribe~~ tribe and to study its Culture in a

Reserve relatively remote from contact with non-Native influences. I am aware, of course, that the interaction and the inter-relation of the various Native tribes made possible by modern conditions is one of the most potent influences in culture change today as it undoubtedly was in the past. But such an investigation conducted in rural Reserve such as I have described would, I take it, give the best results possible under the circumstances. This would be followed perhaps by another in another Reserve occupied by the same tribe, but not so remote from non-Native influences. The effect of altered economic conditions, travel facilities increasing the movement of the population, missionary, educational and other influences would here provide an interesting contrast to conditions in the first Reserve. Later this might be followed by a study of the ~~xxx~~ life of members of the same tribe in an urban area or in industry, e.g. the Sugar Industry or the Coal Mines in Natal where they are removed from the normal life of the tribal Reserve and where they are more directly in contact not only with white influences but also with members of other tribes.

Throughout this work my aim would be to make an intensive of the whole life of families chosen from different strata of the social life of the tribe, living as far as possible in their own homes, noting the influence of various aspects of Bantu and non-Bantu Culture on the solidarity of the family.

With regard to the centre for such a study I have two alternative suggestions to make, namely British Bechuanaland among the Tlhaping and Southern Natal among the Zulu. With regard to the former, although the Tlhaping were among the earliest tribes to come into contact with missionaries in South Africa, little anthropological work has been done among them, especially in recent times, and as to the latter, although tribal solidarity is still very strong among the Zulu, they are rapidly being affected by modern influences such as the increase of transport facilities in the Reserves, the Sugar Industry, etc. In either case I should work in conformity with the suggestion of the South African Inter-University Committee that field-workers would be well advised to seek the guidance and help of local experienced field-workers such as Dr Schapera or Mrs Hoernle in regard to the ethnographical problems of the area they wish to study.

According to present plans I am due to return to Amanzimtoti for period August to December and thence to join the Staff of Fort Hare as Lecturer in the Department of Bantu Studies in February, 1936. In the event of my application being successful, the authorities of Amanzimtoti are prepared to release me from my contract so that I could take up field work at the earliest possible moment prior to going to Fort Hare. At the latter place Principal Kerr is prepared to give me an opportunity to take leave from time to time from College work in order to carry on field-work. This means that my work would have to be done in two or three stages divided by intervals of actual teaching at Fort Hare, where incidentally I shall be in constant contact with African students drawn from different parts of the country.

I should be much obliged to have an early reply as to the result of my application as I sail for South Africa on June 28.

Yours very sincerely,

Z. K. M.